

Bible Study Class
Clayton Presbyterian Church
Lesson 17 Jesus
The Raising of Lazarus

Opening Prayer: *The essence of meditation is a period of time set aside to contemplate the Lord, listen to Him, and allow Him to permeate our spirits.*
Charles Stanley

The lesson today comes from John chapter 11 and Luke chapters 17 and 18. I have divided the readings according to the divisions in my Bible rather than strictly following Taylor's subheadings.

Perea to Bethany. The Raising of Lazarus

Read John 11:1-16

1. What occasioned the miracle performed in this chapter? Lazarus got sick. The sisters send a message to Jesus that Lazarus is sick. They hope that Jesus will come because of His love for their family.
2. What was Jesus' initial reaction to the news about Lazarus? He said that the final result won't be Lazarus' death, but this has happened to bring glory to God's Son. The purpose for Lazarus' sickness was to show Jesus' power over death. While he had raised others from the dead, they hadn't been dead three days. By this resurrection the Son of God would be glorified and bring honor to God. What did His disciples think He meant by it? When He said that Lazarus has fallen asleep, they thought that Lazarus would get well. Verse 5 reiterates Jesus' love for the family to show that His hesitation isn't because He doesn't love them very deeply. He delayed so He could perfect the faith of the sisters and disciples. While the sisters hoped for one type of blessing, He actually enlarges the blessing.
3. Why did Jesus' disciples try to discourage Him from going to Bethany where Lazarus was? The people there had tried to stone Him. Why did He say He must go to Lazarus? In this passage, day represents the time that Jesus has left which was to be ended by what Jesus called "his hour." Lazarus was dead. The disciples had not clearly understood what Jesus said in verse 4. They thought that Lazarus' sleeping was the type of sleep that brings healing not that Lazarus has died. Some commentators believed that by the time Jesus got the message Lazarus was already dead. Since Jewish customs dictate that a dead person is buried within 24 hours of death, we can see how Lazarus had been in the tomb four days.
4. What manifestations of faith in Jesus are seen in the incident? Describe each. Thomas said "let's go with the Teacher so that we may die with Him." Had

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Jesus been present during the sickness of Lazarus, he would have felt constrained to heal him, and would have lost the opportunity of presenting to his disciples a more striking proof of his divine power. The disciples were soon to learn by sad experience how little they really believe. Fourfold says that Thomas still doesn't understand Jesus' power over death. Other commentators give Thomas a little more credit by saying that he was willing to die with Jesus at this point.

Read John 11:17-27

Each person that Jesus raised from the dead is progressing toward Christ's own resurrection. Jairus' daughter was raised from her bed. The young man of Nain was being carried to the grave. Now Lazarus has been buried for four days. Bethany is about 2 miles outside Jerusalem so many people were there to comfort the sisters. The Jewish custom of mourning was seven days of public mourning and thirty days of private mourning. Jesus may have waited on the edge of town, trying to avoid the crowds. Martha meets Him while Mary is still at home. Jesus and Martha have a conversation about resurrection and while Martha states her belief, in verse 39 she will express concern over the smell of the dead body. The doctrine of a resurrection was commonly held by all the Jews except the Sadducees. The National Catholic Register said this: However, the nature of this afterlife is not fully clear. It appears that they believed most people had a shadowy kind of existence in the next world, about which not much was known. As the centuries progressed, however, the afterlife came into clearer focus, manifesting in a belief in bodily resurrection on the last day. The clearest passages referring to this are found in Daniel and 2 Maccabees.

Daniel 12: 2 And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

This attests to a resurrection of both the righteous (those who gain everlasting life) and the wicked (those who gain shame and everlasting contempt). The passage in Maccabees is much longer but also refers to an afterlife where family members will be reunited. They belief was in a distant impersonal type of resurrection, while in this conversation Jesus is trying to get Martha to see that resurrection comes through Him. She confesses her faith in Jesus but avoids the conflicting idea that if Lazarus had believed he wouldn't have died.

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Read John 11: 28-37

Martha has left Jesus to go and get Mary so that she could have a private word with Jesus. Jesus is probably still waiting outside town. However, the crowd in the home follow Mary. She tells Jesus that Lazarus wouldn't have died if He had been there.

5. Why do you think Jesus wept as He stood before the tomb of Lazarus? He felt the grief of His friends. He knew that His message had not been fully understood by His disciples or His friends. The people seeing Him weeping realized that He had great love for Lazarus, but there were doubters in the crowd saying that He could have kept Lazarus from dying.

Read John 11: 38-44

These stones were frequently in the shape of large grindstones resting in a groove, so that they could be rolled in front of the door of the tomb. The stone was to keep animals out of the tomb. Martha remarks at this point that there will be a smell because he has been dead four days. Jewish people are not embalmed. Jesus reminds her that He told her she would see God's glory. He prays so that people can hear Him and will believe that God sent Him. Then He commands Lazarus to come out. One comment in Fourfold is that it is good that He called Lazarus by name or all the dead would have arisen. Part of the miracle was that he could walk out being bound like a mummy. Jesus told them to untie Lazarus' grave cloths.

Read John 11: 45-57

6. What was the reaction(s) of the Jews to the miracle Jesus performed? Some believed in Jesus. Some went to tell the Pharisees who then started to panic that this miracle would draw the attention of the Roman authorities. This is when Caiaphas the High Priest uttered his famous statement that it was better for one man to die rather than the whole nation. The Sanhedrin calls meeting. Fourfold notes that since Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea were part of the Sanhedrin that the Christians would get the story of what transpired. Verse 47 tells us that they recognized that He performed miracles.

7. What were some of the consequences of this miracle? The plot to kill Jesus became more intense. Jesus didn't travel openly. They had condemned Jesus without a trial. Verse 48 If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and

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the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation. KJV. Place may mean their positions.

Retiring Before Sanhedrin's Decree

8. Where did Jesus go after leaving Bethany? He went to the desert near Ephraim. Why did He go there? To be with His disciples away from those who wanted to kill Him. He probably went to a village about 16 miles away from Jerusalem that has a commanding view of the Jordan valley and is on the edge of the wilderness.

9. What question did the Jews ask in reference to Jesus at the Passover? They were asking whether He would come. What order had the chief priests and Pharisees given at the feast in relation to Jesus? Anyone who knew where He was must report it.

Journey to Jerusalem. Ten Lepers. Concerning the Kingdom

Jesus passed northward from Ephraim about forty miles, crossing Samaria and coming to the border of Galilee. He then crossed the Jordan into Perea, where we soon find him moving on toward Jericho in the midst of the caravan of pilgrims on the way to the Passover. The next passage follows what we read last Sunday about the servant's duty.

Read Luke 17:11-19

10. What request did ten lepers make of Jesus as He entered a village? They weren't standing on the road, but besides it begging, just as you see homeless people begging today. They asked for Him to have pity on them. The Old Testament law said that lepers should be separate from the other people. What was His reply? He told them to go and let the priests examine them. This is based on the instructions given to Moses in Leviticus 13. What was the result? As they were on the way to the priest they were healed. Their obedience healed them.

11. What was the reaction of the lepers when they discovered they were healed? One of them, the Samaritan returned to thank Jesus. Apparently nine of the lepers were Jews. A Samaritan was among them because they were along the border of his country, and because the fellowship of affliction and disease obliterated the distinctions of race, as it does to this day. In the leper-houses at

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Jerusalem Mohammedans and Jews now live together despite the rancor existing between the healthy representatives of these two religions.

12. What did Jesus say to one leper who returned to Him? Jesus asks "There were ten men who were healed where are the other nine. Why is the foreigner the only one to come back and thank God?" He noted the difference. As we look around to-day and see how many are ungrateful for the blessings which they receive, the words ring like an echo in our ears. Jesus emphasized the fact that the blessing came through faith, encouraging the man to seek higher blessings the same way.

Read Luke 17:20-37

13. What was Jesus' reply to the Pharisees who asked Him when the kingdom of God should come? He said that it didn't come so a person can see it. It is within You. The question of the Pharisees was doubtless a covert criticism. More than three years before this Jesus had begun to say that the kingdom of heaven was at hand; and they thought that after all this preparation it was high time that the kingdom should commence. They were looking for some manifestation of the sovereignty of God in the realm of the civil and the external, which would raise the Jewish nation to conspicuous supremacy, but they are told that the work of the kingdom is internal and spiritual.

14. In warning His disciples not to be deceived by the false "christs" who would appear, how did Jesus make it clear that His coming would be obvious to all? He equated it to lightning flashing across the sky, lighting up the whole sky. If the Pharisees looked eagerly for a sensuous external Messianic kingdom, the disciples would be tempted in the days to come to cherish a somewhat similar yearning. Knowing that Jesus was to come again to rule in power and in great glory, they would, under the stress of persecution, hunger to see one of the days of his rule. This longing for the coming of the Christ is frequently expressed. Jesus warns them, telling them that when the kingdom of heaven does at last assume a visible shape that manifestation will be so glorious, universal and pronounced as to be absolutely unmistakable.

15. What did Jesus say had to come to past before He would come to His glory? He predicted His suffering and rejection. When he speaks of his glory Jesus is careful to mention the humiliation and suffering which precedes it, that the faith

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of his disciples may not be weakened by false expectations and misunderstandings. Since that generation would reject him the day of glory was not for them.

16. To what two previous events did Jesus like the conditions which would exist at His coming? He compares it to the time of Noah and the time of Lot. Jesus here gives us two historical incidents of the false security of the ungodly, and endorses them as real history. The people before the flood and the citizens of Sodom went about their daily activities with no thought of evil or anticipation of trouble. What were you doing on September 10, 2001? You may not remember but you do remember the next day. Despite all warnings, they were taken by surprise when completely off their guard. The coming of Christ shall be a like surprise to the people of the last day. If our hope has been centered upon earthly things, we will be found looking for things, just as the face of Lot's wife was turned toward Sodom despite the glare of the fires. Our earthly characters become fixed, and great catastrophes do not change them. Day and night exist simultaneously upon the earth, and the Lord's coming will be at noon to some and at midnight to others. His saints will be found mingled with the rest of the people and engaged in regular activities. But the Lord will receive them to himself as his own. Jesus gave a proverbial answer, which means that sin attracts and draws punishment and destruction just as a carcass draws buzzards. Applying his words, we may say just as the corruption of the people before the flood drew upon them, the devastation of the flood, and as the crimes of the Sodomites called down the fires from heaven, and as the unbelief of the Jews of Christ's day caused the destruction of Jerusalem and the death of the nation, so the wickedness of people of the last days will result in the end of the physical world.

The parable of the Importunate Widow

Read Luke 18:1-8

17. Briefly summarize this parable. The judge is utterly corrupt and the widow is the symbol for defenseless victims. Just as the Bible teaches, the early church concerned itself with widows. The point of this soliloquy is this: The judge was not moved by accountability to God or man to do this woman justice, he did it so he could be rid of her. There are three points: 1. In the petitioner—a just God and an unrighteous judge. 2. In the petitioners—a despised widow and the beloved elect.

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3. In the petition—the frequent visits of the one, and the continual cries of the many.

18. What lesson was it intended to teach? Though a beloved people cry continually to a just God, because He has mercy to their enemies, and because of the delay it seems that He isn't answering. However, the delay will not be a moment longer than necessary. When the season of repentance is past, and the measure of iniquity is full, then the Lord's answer will be speedy, immediate. We would like for the crisis in Ukraine to be over but God is delaying relief for these people. To us, it seems unfair, but we don't have the vision of God. But despite this admonition to pray without discouragement, and this promise to answer with all speed, God's patience with the wicked, and his consequent delays in answering the prayers of the just, will prove such a trial to his people as to leave it questionable whether any of them will have faith enough to pray until the coming of the Lord. The parable resembles that of the friend who came at midnight but there the petitioner asked a gift, and here the request is for justice and deliverance. And this parable also teaches that the saints must be patient in prayer until the Lord's return.

The parable of the Pharisee and Publican

Read Luke 18:9-14

19. Briefly summarize this parable. It is commonly said that this parable teaches humility in prayer, but the preface and conclusion show that it shows the difference between self-righteousness and humility. The occasion of prayer is chosen because it best illustrates the point which the Lord desired to teach. The parable shows that the righteousness of the Pharisee was devoid of that true charity or heart-love toward God and man. Without this love our characters are worthless in the sight of God. The temple was the appointed place for Jewish prayer. The Jews who were near enough went to the Temple to pray. If they were too far away, they prayed towards it. The stated hours of prayer were 9 A. M. and 3 P. M., but men went there to pray whenever they felt like it. The two represent the two extremes of society of the time. That the Pharisee stood may mean that he stood alone, withdrawing from the contamination of others, but it seems rather to mean that he prayed having himself uppermost in his thoughts. His prayer is more a boast as to himself than an expression of worship toward God and he makes the sinful record of the publican a dark background on which to display the bright

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contrast of his own character—a character for which he was thankful, and apparently with reason. Fourfold gives a great cross reference from Revelation 3: 17-18 This is part of the passage directed to the church of Laodicea. May we pray that it doesn't apply to us.

17 You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. 18 I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see.

The Pharisee goes on boasting, the law appointed one fast in the year, on the Day of Atonement, but the Pharisees fasted on Mondays and Thursdays of each week. I give the tenth part of my income. The law required that tithes be given from the corn, wine, oil, and cattle, but the Pharisees took account of the humblest herbs of the garden, and gave a tenth of their mint, anise, and cumin. He confessed his virtues rather than his sins. The publican is standing in a place far from the Holy Place. He beats his breast as a symbol of the striking he thinks He deserves from God. He makes full confession of his sin without excuse or justification, and without offset of righteousness. He asks for no blessings, but simply asks for mercy.

20. What lesson was it intended to teach? We are taught here, as in the parable of the prodigal son, that the penitent unrighteous are more acceptable to God than the righteous who make no confession of their sins.

Closing prayer: Lord, today we honor our mothers as well as those who have nurtured or influenced us along our life journey. Help us to remember what You inspired them to teach us. In Jesus' name, Amen.

John 11:1-16	Luke 17:11-19	Luke 18: 1-8
John 11:17-27	Luke 17:20-37	Luke 18:9-14
John 11: 28-37		
John 11: 38-44		
John 11: 45-57		